

Grafrica

New Directions For Positive People

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"The Emperor Jones"

"On the Cover"

On this week's issue of *Grafrica*, Paul Robeson is pictured in costume for one of his most famous roles—"Emperor Jones" written by Eugene O'Neill and first performed by Robeson on stage in 1925. One of the first black actors to actively strive to create a strong positive black image on screen, many of the roles played by Robeson were stereotyped. However, he brought a sense of dignity, integrity and sensitivity which transformed these low-level characters. Robeson knew film had the power to bring a true better race relations. By continually starring in films which would reach a mass audience, Robeson hoped his characterizations would "make them [whites] realize, even if only subconsciously, and for moments, that Negroes are the same kind of people they themselves are; that all this arbitrary separation because of color is unimportant, that we are all hu-

man beings."

One of the most respected performing artists and humanists of his lifetime, Paul Robeson was named All American in 1917 and in 1918 while playing and for Rutgers University. His academic record at Rutgers also earned him Phi Beta Kappa honors in his junior year.

Robeson received a law degree from Columbia University in 1923, before launching his professional stage career appearing in such successes as the above-mentioned "Emperor Jones", "Porgy" and "Othello". In his later years, Robeson became a world-renowned spokesman for the rights of blacks and other oppressed people. He died in 1976.

"Special Thanks to Mr. James Brown, Senior Librarian, Newark Public Library, for his assistance in preparing this issue."

PAUL ROBESON

By James Brown

Let the residue of his quiet intensity linger peacefully over all - and sustain us.

Let the memory of his powerful voice echo like thunder across the universe bidding adieu to racism.

Let the telling affirmation of his life be a shining example of exactness which our children can strive to emulate.

Let his unequal temper kindle a fiery flame among us and bestow in us a will and resolution to fight back until the day be done.

Let his wisdom fill our souls with unyielding motivation and inspiration.

Let the sum total of his life, like a beacon in the sky guide us, one and all, toward replenished shores.

Let future historians write of him in all his grandeur, spirited idealism, wonder and heroic dimensions.

Finally, let his life be the paradigm by which our degree of blackness is measured.

Scott Flowers

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Paul Robeson as he appeared in "Proud Valley" the tale of a Welsh coal mining town which befriends a young black stranger. This was the one film in which Robeson was to depict a three-dimensional character, and the role of which he was most proud.

PAUL ROBESON On Stage

This article is reprinted by permission of the Editor, "First World - An International Journal of Black Thought", Volume 2 Number 1, Atlanta, Georgia.

By
Helen Armstrong
Johnson

Paul Robeson as performer is one of the icons of theatrical history. Described in the New York Evening Post in 1943 as "the most imposing personality on Broadway today," the untrained Robeson seemed to confirm the myth that Blacks were natural singers and actors who neither needed training nor sought any. In a London review with Robert Van Gelder, Robeson confessed that, "When I set up as an actor, I didn't know how to get from one side of the stage to the other. When I started playing Othello—in London, that is—I was almost as bad." Robeson strode majestically across the stage, his voice, however, for he possessed what have been described as a nobility of mind, a sincerity of spirit, a tranquil dignity, an authoritative strength, and a richness of vocal utterance. When appropriate, he also had a melancholy, a sadness, a tenderness, a pathos, such attributes crafted a sense of magnificence and believability of rare quality. As another London critic assessed him in more emotional language, "Underneath he plays thrillingly upon the nerves and knocks at the heart."

Even a brief consideration of Robeson the performer should touch upon the following things: his entrance into and the highlights of the world of entertainment and theater, his atti-

tudes toward his work and himself, Black perceptions of the relationship between his theatrical roles and race, and finally, the universal man.

Paul Robeson's entry into show business is rather eclectic, eristic of Hollywood, even though it did not take place there. It was the apocryphal chance meeting. According to Lynn Harold Browning, lead actress in the Four Harmony Kings of *Shuffle Along* (1921), W. Lee Harte, the bass singer, had left the show to go on the Chautauque circuit for the summer. Worried about a replacement as he walked with his wife along Seventh Avenue, Browning saw Robeson and his wife coming toward them. When the two couples stopped to talk, the conversation was Browning's problem. Robeson's response to it was, "Why you're talking to a bass singer now," which eliminated the problem. Within a short while, Lee Leslie, lead Florence Mills, the show-stopping soprano of *Shuffle Along*, away from it to star in his new Plantation Club. With her went Robeson, but not for long.

In April, 1922, Robeson made his first professional dramatic appearance in New York as Jim in *Tobacco at the Sun*. H. Harts Theatre on 42nd Street. With Margaret Wycherly playing the only white role as the grand mother of a male child, Fannie

Belle de Night, Marie Stuart, and Alex Rogers played the Louisiana plantation Blacks. In the program, Robeson was listed as Paul L.

Renamed *The Voodoo*, the show moved to England, where it opened at the Opera House in Blackpool on July 20, 1922, with the actress Mrs. Patrick Campbell playing the lead. The play was rather unsuccessful and never reached London. Even a brief slouch of the plot leaves little room for wonder. The plantation Blacks believed that the child was bewitched, and suggested that the grand mother have a luck ball prepared by the old witch women. The scene then shifted to a juke compound on the Guinea Coast and a dream sequence about the origin of voodoo. Here the sleeping African sees himself as the king and Grandmother Cayenne as the queen. In a macabre ritual, the African sacrifices an albino child to the flames. Back on the plantation, when the Blacks threaten to kill Jim because of the appearance of the male child after its luck ball treatment, the child finds his voice just in time to save Jim. This play by Mary Haye Wilson was described as "ambitious, gaudious, and artless." Moreover, in performance, Mrs. Campbell kept interrupting, largely by having Robeson sing at the most crucial moments, especially when

he was asleep.

When Robeson's concert career began to take on the shape of success, he had a little more musical training than he had had dramatic training. It seems to have amounted to the "special interest in training this voice" taken by Miss Vosseller, his high school class director, along with his father's "instincts on purity of diction," which he mentions in *Here I Stand*. Much later, after Robeson's singing of "Ballad for Americans" on his 43rd birthday, a Cleveland columnist noted that "he has taken singing lessons, but he took them after he was already a concert-stage hero and phonograph idol." Yet on March 10, 1980, *The Manchester Program*, an English theater advertisement, gushed on its first page that, "Manchester is to see and hear Paul Robeson in the flesh." "Nothing that Jellie, Kiriakos, and Pachelbel had already appeared earlier in the season, and that there had been 'masterly expiations' of 'The Messiah' and 'Elia'." The article anticipated the appearance of Robeson as "perhaps the most interesting event of the season." His songs were described as "the mother-song of mankind, the hidden songs that all men and all women hear whispering in their buried memory." The most important observation was that, "It is not only

the dreaming Negro soul that yearns to these melodies; he hears it to the sad soul of humanity reaching out into the mystery of life and death." What is more, the writer concluded, Robeson had the ability to make his listeners see things as he saw them when he sang.

Such ability lay partly, as Robeson went to say later, in his refusal to do anything he did not understand. As a consequence, he would no longer sing songs of the German, French, or Italian because he did not understand their psychology or philosophy. "Their history has nothing in common with the history of my slave ancestors." Furthermore, in admiring American Blacks not to imitate American culture, but to reach backward into their own traditions, Robeson explained that he had come to this idea through music and through his "search for something besides American Negro folk songs" to which to apply himself to the stage. It was with such songs, however, that Robeson and Lawrence Brown, his arranger and accompanist, cut new musical profits with their first concert of spirituals in 1925 in response to demand. According to John Llewellyn in *Black Song: The Forge and the Flame*, Robeson sang only these for five years.

Concerts ended. It is to Robe-

On Stage

son as actor that attention must now be paid. When Eugene O'Neill's *All God's Children Got Wings* opened at the Provincetown Playhouse in New York on May 15, 1924, Brooklyn critic Arthur Pollock asserted that it had had "almost as much publicity as a murder." Why? Because the theme was miscegenation, marriage between what Ludwig Lewisohn called "a first-rate Negro and third-rate white woman," played by Mary Bell. Beginning when the two were children together, the play moves through seven stages of their development. Pollock and Lewisohn saw Robeson as an actor committed differently. Pollock said harshly that, "Mr. Robeson to us was a great disappointment. He is an earnest, hardworking 'amateur' and nothing more, apparently. During the first act he is merely a big awkward boy in the second he becomes part of his self-consciousness, a very natural self-consciousness under the circumstances, into himself again and gives a good performance." Pollock's assessment seems to be more in line with Robeson's own "when he set up as an actor."

Lewisohn, on the other hand,

saw Robeson as "a superb actor, extraordinarily sincere and eloquent." Perhaps Lewisohn's most respectful observation is his approximation of the nearness of his own emotions to those of the ancient Greeks whose dramatic actions also "had their origin in inexpressible myth and ancient sentiment." Jordan Miller, in *Playwrights' Progress*, O'Neill and the Critics, groups *All God's Children* and O'Neill's other plays from 1920-1925 as the period of his search for theme and form.

It is within this period that O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones* tells. In his New York Times review of November 7, 1920, Alexander Wolcott, although critical of the staging, confessed that the play "bore a most potent spell, thanks partly to the admirable playing of Charles S. Gilpin in the title role." It was not until 1925 that Robeson as Brutus Jones became the "Emperor" in *Writing in the English News Statesman* (September 19, 1925). John Shand assured his readers that the play was worth seeing mainly "because of Mr. Paul Robeson in the leading

part." Professing nothing but admiration for his performance, Shand was most prophetic when he ventured that, "Mr. Robeson's voice, intelligence, physique, and sense of the stage immediately made me want to see him in *Othello*."

It was five years, unfortunately, before Shand could see such an *Othello*. When it opened at the Savoy Theatre on May 19, 1930, Paul Robeson, trapped everything he had ever done before. London's morning Post felt compelled to admit that, "There had been no *Othello* on our stage for 40 years to compare with him, in dignity, simplicity, and true poise." On stage with Robeson were Maurice Brown as Iago, Sybil Thumcke as Emilia, and Peggy Ashcroft as Desdemona. Newspaper headline writers were ecstatic: "Robeson acclaimed in *Othello* Role"; "American Negro's debut in Shakespearean Play Takes London by Storm"; "Audience Rises in Tremor," and "Twenty Curtain Calls for Star."

All of this notwithstanding, Robeson, according to Van Gelder, felt that he was not helped at all by Harrison Swafford's raising

the issue of "how the public will take to seeing a Negro made to take a white woman and throw her around the stage. Now probably most people that didn't bother a bit—but it sure bothered me I was like a plantation hand in the parlor, that clumsy. But the notices were good, I got over it."

When first offered the part in *Othello*, Robeson refused it. When he accepted, however, he snatched himself in Shakespeare for the next six months. Then it was that G.W. Bishop was able to cable The New York Times that, "Of no ability of mind and rich beauty of utterance, it is difficult to think the part could be better played." Another critic's view was that Robeson achieved dramatic heights, not because he was a man with a black skin, but because he was a great actor. This unidentified critic's description of the performance is worth noting:

At first he seemed nervous. When he was speaking he did not seem to know what to do with his arms and hands. His arms hung listlessly by his side and sometimes his fingers twitched.

But as the tragedy unfolded to its tremendous climax, the actor seemed to grow in power with it. In his wrath he was terrific. In his remorse, in his noble, deep sorrow, at times almost too controlled, made the beautiful measured poetry sound like the music that it is. One heard every syllable he uttered—a rare treat to date. When he stood on the stage, beenthrowed, now, every one, he reminded one of pictures of Goliath in the old Jewish Bible.

Such was the measure of a man who could see himself the image of a plantation hand in the parlor. Whatever the measure in London, it was to be 13 years before New York could take its own.

Meanwhile, Robeson appeared in concert, toured the variety circuit, and made a number of British films about Africa. Although these are now part of this treatment of Robeson's career, it is important to be aware of their purpose as he idealized it. Thomas Cripps, in *Slow Fade to Black*, says that Robeson answered a chance to show Black men living out their lives, led by a great Black leader "set between the races." Most scenes supporting such idealism ended on the cutting room floor, subsequently, Robeson was maligned for making films which upheld British imperialism, films which he came to hate. It was not all hindsight, though. As a case in point, Nina Mae McKinnin's husband, Melvin Winfield, was in South Africa during the filming of *Sandara of the River* and recognized for this writer, the only film which Robeson had with the di-

rector. It is enough to repeat Cripps: "Poor Robeson."

The next audience was swathed back in New York when, as Joe, Robeson sang "O' Man River" in Zaigle's 1932 production of *Shenandoah*, starring Irene Dunne and Dennis King. He was Joe again in the London production of 1934. Once again, however, Robeson was playing a male role that had been created by another actor, Jules Brasseur, in the original production of 1927.

It was not until 1943 that American theatergoers could take their measure of Robeson as *Othello*, even though an announcement that he would appear on Broadway was made as early as 1930. Margaret Webster, the director, as quoted in Marie Sotoni's *Paul Robeson*, explained her tenacity. "I believed that a production of the play with him in it could be a landmark in the American theater and in the history of American social consciousness. It took us all these years to prove ourselves right."

After failing to secure backing, Robeson and Webster held try-out performances in Cambridge and Princeton. Under Theater Guild sponsorship, additional tryouts were held in New Haven and Boston when *Othello* finally opened at the Shubert Theatre on October 19, 1943. "Othello" was Iago, Una Hagen, Desdemona, Margaret Webster, Emilia, and James Morris was Cassio.

In February of the following year, The American Academy of Arts and Letters awarded Robeson its medal for Good Action on the Stage. Only nine others had been so honored. The medal came with an intensely heightened private meaning for Robeson: his father's training in and insistence upon purity of diction. The father's influence was so pervasive that, as Benjamin Robeson saw his brother, he was actually "the personification of his father with his own personality added."

Far more intriguing at this point than the already familiar critical judgments are the perceptions of the relationship between Robeson's theatrical roles and their own race consciousness.

As Shakespearean scholar Thomas Mac Parrott observed, that which drew *Othello* was not merely sexual jealousy, but the passion for the loss of an ideal, which is far nobler. In Act IV, Scene I, Iago taunts *Othello* with sexual images of Desdemona's supposed infidelity to the point where *Othello* begins to tremble. It is not words that shake him this time. Then, as Shakespeare directs, the actor falls in a trance. After seeing Robeson's whirling on the floor, one of his friends thought him quite graceful. "Paul, quit falling on the floor in

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BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

RE-DISCOVERED

PART II OF III PARTS

Our Greatest Asset

Booker T. Washington spoke in his Atlanta Exposition Address, of his deep concern for black education. He expressed the view that the nation's greatest asset and security is to be found in the most extensive education of the mind. He called upon his overwhelmingly white southern audience to encourage black education as paying possibly the highest dividends imaginable.

Dr. Washington stated:

"There is no defence or security for any of us except in the highest intelligence and development of all. If anywhere there are efforts tending to curtail the fullness of growth of the Negro, let these efforts be turned into stimulating, encouraging, and making him the most useful and intelligent citizen. Effort or means so invested will pay a thousand percent interest. These efforts will be twice blessed—"blessing him that gives and him that takes."

"There it no escape through law of man or God from the inevitable—

The law of changeless justice bend

Overpower with opposed;

And close its arms and suffering joined
We march to fair ahead.

"Nearly sixteen millions of hands will aid you in pulling the load upward, or they will pull against you the load downward. We shall consolidate one-third and more of the ignorance and crime of the South, or one-third its intelligence and progress; we shall consolidate one-third to the business and industrial prosperity of the South, or shall prove a veritable body of death. . ."

Washington's concept of education involved the development of character, of determination and then of a sense of discipline in one's mind and in one's work. It placed a high priority upon excellence. Role models were essential. But more important, in his view of education, was the spirit of dedication and concern on the part of those who teach. Further, education should prepare the mind while at the same time preparing one's hands for productive labor. Indeed, the learning of hand and hand should relate to each other. Added to this must be the heart. The Bible, with its moral lessons, and its exaltation of service along with its incomparable literary worth—was seen as crucial for the development of a fully educated man or woman. Cleanliness, good manners and common sense must be included, too.



With all of these elements in mind, Booker T. Washington went about shaping the curriculum at Tuskegee. He encouraged Tuskegee's graduates and other leaders in their work with schools elsewhere to keep all of these ingredients as a part of the educational process.

Concerning his own childhood experience, Washington relates: "Often I would have to walk several miles at night in order to reach my night-school lessons. There was never a time in my youth, no matter how dark and discouraging the day might be, when one resolve did not continually remain with me, and that was a determination to secure an education at any cost."

Overcoming Disabilities

Concerning the need for compensatory treatment in the overcoming of handicaps, Washington would hold the view that one's personal self-esteem and one's sense of education's value in relation to one's personal and racial hopes were all-important.

Two remarkable reflections are shared with us in this regard. The first tells of Washington's experience with teaching himself the alphabet. He states:

"From the time that I can remember having any thoughts about anything, I recall

that I had an intense longing to read. I determined, when quite a small child, that, if I accomplished writing the *in* life, I would in some way get enough education to enable me to read common books and newspapers. Soon after we got settled in some matter in our new cabin in West Virginia, I induced my mother to get hold of a book for me, *How to* where she got it I do not know, but in some way she procured an old copy of Webster's "bluebook" spelling-book, which contained the alphabet, followed by such meaningless words as *ah, ba, ca, da*. I began at once to devour this book, and I think that it was the first one I ever held in my hands.

"I had learned from somebody that the way to begin to read was to learn the alphabet, so I tried in all the ways I could think of to learn it—all of course without a teacher, for I could find no one to teach me. At that time there was not a single member of my race anywhere near us who could read, and I was too timid to approach any of the white people. In some way, within a few weeks, I mastered the greater portion of the alphabet.

"In all my efforts to learn to read my mother shared fully in my ambition, and sympathized with me and aided me in every way that she could. Though she was totally ignorant, so far as mere book knowledge was concerned, she had high ambitions for

her children, and a large fund of good, hard common sense which seemed to enable her to meet and master every situation. If I have done anything as life worth attention, I feel sure that I inherited the disposition from my mother."

The second reflection concerning the overcoming of disabilities from the past is marked by a race sense of both human worth and racial pride. Excellence, he emphasizes, comes not from outer supports but from inner feelings and personal drive. Washington writes:

"I confess that I do not envy the white boy as I once did. I have learned that success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached or life as by the obstacles which he has overcome while trying to succeed. Looked at from this standpoint, I almost reach the conclusion that often the Negro boy's birth and connection with an unpopular race is an advantage, so far as real life is concerned.

"With few exceptions, the Negro youth must work harder and must perform his task even better than a white youth in order to secure recognition. But out of the hard and unusual struggle which he is compelled to pass, he gets a strength, a confidence, that one misadventure whose pathway is comparatively smooth by reason of birth and race.

"From any point of view, I had rather be what I am, a member of the Negro race, than be able to claim membership with the *quo* favored of any other race. I have always been made sad when I have heard members of any race claiming rights and privileges, or certain badges of distinction, on the ground that they were members of this or that race, regardless of their own individual worth or attainments.

"I have been made to feel bad for such persons because I am conscious of the fact that mere connection with what is known as a superior race will not permanently carry an individual forward unless he has individual worth, and more connection with what is regarded as an inferior race will not finally hold an individual back if he possesses intrinsic, individual merit. Every persecuted individual and race should get much consolation out of the great human law, which is universal and eternal, that merit, no matter under what skin found, is in the long run, recognized and rewarded."

(To Be Continued)

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Warith Deen Muhammad To Address Educational Benefit

Imam Warith Deen Muhammad, leader, American Muslim Mission and probably one of the most respected and controversial crusaders for human rights and social justice to arrive on the American scene in the last decade, will address a special Educational Benefit

Banquet to be held in New York City's Cooperative Auditorium, 351 Grand Street, at 9 p.m. on Friday, April 17, 1981. The Banquet, which will be presented by the Education Department of Masjid Makolm Shabazz, Northeast Regional Headquarters of the American

Muslim Mission, is being held for the benefit of the New York City branch of the highly esteemed Sister Clara Muhammad, Elementary Secondary School. Nationally established, there are 43 such active schools throughout the country. Imam Warith Deen Muhammad first made headlines in 1975 when he took over the leadership of the Muslim Organization (Mosque) at that time as the Nation of Islam following the death of his father, the former leader, Elijah Muhammad. A much sought after speaker both here in America

and abroad as a result of his ongoing pro-human rights efforts towards achieving a better society for all people, Imam Warith Deen Muhammad will offer his comments on one of America's most pressing concerns—Quality Education. He is also the author of the most popular new book entitled, "As The Light Shines From The East". If you have never had the opportunity to hear this dynamic speaker then you will not want to miss this special event. One thing is certain—when Imam Warith Deen Muhammad speaks, people sit, indeed, listen. Circle the

date on your calendar now—Friday, April 17, 1981, 6 p.m. to 11 p.m., Cooperative Auditorium, 351 Grand Street, New York City. Tickets, which include dinner and live entertainment, are \$35.00 each for all attendees. For further information contact: Education Department, Masjid Makolm Shabazz, 188 West 116th Street, New York, N.Y. 10026 (212) 865-6506 or 662-2200.

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Gylbert Collier, an art critic
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Amos' hand-woven canvases,
like her drawings and prints,
present an endless wealth of
possibilities. She endows her
work with the individual biogre-
phy, the successive passing
through of various phases of life
that provide a meaning and a
feeling that makes the whole
subjectively plausible."

In a more graphic description
of her work Ms. Amos said, "As
for style, combining abstraction
with figure drawing, weaving
with painting and collage is
what makes going to my studio
exciting and faintly
dangerous. Now I'm weaving
my looms to weave large,
painted floating canvases.
From papermaking, it's an easy
jump to felt-making so I can
weave, color, sew and glow
chunks of quilt."

Referring to the situation of
her work, in part to black wo-
men, she said "And I'll keep do-

ing unknown, (as well as estab-
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plishments of such artists, and
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ing the etched women who
stare out from their plates and
pressed paper. I love their atti-
tude. They are my solid
ground."

Ms. Amos has participated in
many selected group exhibi-
tions including "Artists Who
Make Prints," Federal Plaza,
New York, N.Y. 1980; "Black
Artist's South," Huntsville Mu-
seum, Huntsville, AL, 1979;
and "African American Arts," Bos-
ton Museum of Fine Arts, Bos-
ton, Ma.

In addition, her work is dis-
played in various public collec-
tions such as the Museum of
African Art, Washington, D.C.;
Museum of Modern Art, New
York, N.Y.; Spelman College,



EMMA AMOS, artist. "Paper and Linen"

Atlanta, Ga., and the United
States Embassy, London, Eng-
land.

Born and raised in Atlanta,
Ga., Ms. Amos received her
Bachelor of Art from Antioch
College in 1958 and her Master
of Art from New York Universi-
ty in 1966. Earlier in 1960, she

was awarded a diploma in etch-
ing from the London Central
School of Art.

In 1977-78 she was the well-
known star of "Show of Hands,"
a 13-week "How-to" craft series
produced by WGBH Educa-
tional TV in Boston, Ma. Cur-
rently, she is an Assistant Pro-

fessor of Art at Rutgers Univer-
sity, New Brunswick, N.J.

Her most recent exhibit ap-
peared at the national Urban
League's Gallery 62. The galler-
y was established as an exhibi-
tion outlet for talented, but as



DREAM GIRL, 1978



MAN OH MAN, 1980



(Above) Paul Robeson singing at Peekskill concert (1949). Around the artist are war vets and concert goers who acted as bodyguard for Robeson.

(Center) Paul Robeson with the Editors of Freedomways at "Welcome Home" birthday tribute, (April, 1965) in New York. (Left to right) J. H. O'Dell, Eulanda Robeson, John Henrik Clarke, Paul Robeson, Norma Rogers, Esther Jackson.

(Below) With coeds at Bennett College, in Greensboro, N.C. in the early 1940's.



(Above left) Paul Robeson with Lena Horne.

(Above right) Paul Robeson visiting with world heavyweight boxing champion Joe Louis at Louis' training camp.

(Below) Paul Robeson at the Southern Negro Youth Congress Convention at Tuskegee Institute, 1942. This was Robeson's first major concert in the deep South and to the first non-segregated audience in this area. With him are Tuskegee students and Esther Jackson, now Managing Editor of Freedomways.

STATE, FEDERAL CUTS IN FUNDS PERIL TO SCHOOLS, NJEA WARNS

State and federal funding cut-backs in aid to education will mean that public schools are in for rough sledding financially unless teachers and other school employees do something about it, Essex County teachers were told March 25, at the Patrician Cafeteria, Livingston, N.J.

Speaking at the annual Essex County Legislative dinner, New Jersey Education Assn. Executive Director James P. Connerion said the combinations of federal and state education aid cuts will result in reduced opportunities for the State's children, especially those with special needs.

"When Secretary of Education Terrell Bell scraps the federal bilingual program and announces no support for tuition tax credits for the parents of private school students, it becomes clear that we cannot look to the federal government to help the public schools," Connerion said. "They are being regarded as a place of last resort for someone else's children. The abdication of responsibilities and financial support by the federal government will throw an even heavier burden on New Jersey's tax resources, both state and local, and should provoke definition of the principal focus of the 1981 New Jersey elections."

Connerion told the gathering that Essex County will be hit hard by cuts in minimum school aid, transportation and other items of State funding. The NJEA leader pointed out that if Gov. Brendan Byrne's plan to abolish minimum aid is allowed to stand by the Legislature, Essex stands to lose \$4,411,362 in State dollars for education.

"That's quite a chunk to lose for any county," Connerion declared. "Some districts will lose heavily."

"This huge cut can mean only one of two things: either the district will increase property taxes by huge amounts to make up for the lost State revenue, or they will make large-scale program and staff cutbacks. That is not our understanding of 'thorough and efficient' education," Connerion said, referring to the popular name of the State education law.

To counteract the growing trend toward school aid cut-backs, Connerion urged the teachers and school workers assembled to become more ac-

tive politically.

"How many of the fine friends of education who already sit as senators and assemblypersons in the current legislature will occupy those same seats in 1982? How many of those who are not concerned about public education will still be here or will be replaced by persons who

are concerned? Will the new governor be concerned about public education, about opportunities for children? Will the new governor take a long-range view and see how current legislative action will affect us 20 years hence, in our industries, our agriculture, our service areas, our job market, our

water and energy supply?"

Connerion and many members of the audience were but look saying "121 in 81," mean-

ing that NJEA is attempting to elect 120 legislators and a governor friendly to public education.

Universal Sounds

April Eugene

The comeback of Sly Stone is in the works. He's teaming up with George Clinton...

"Body Music" by Stykers and "Let's Do It" are perfect 10's for the party scene.

Philadelphia International artists in studio: Pettie LaBelle in studio with Dexter Wansel and Gamble and Huff; Gamble also producing Teddy Pendergrass. Teddy's jeans should be in the area soon; Jean Carr is in the studio with Norman Connors. I

hear she's doing a version of "Love Don't Love Nobody" that will put the Spinners in a spin.

New from Atlantic/Coffin: Stacy Lattimore in studio with Narada Michael Walden. This will be her third album on the Coffin label. Chic is in the studio with Deborah Harry (Blondie). They just finished production on Johnny Mathis' forthcoming album.

Hot fares this week: "When Love Calls"—Atlantic Star.

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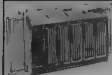
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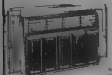
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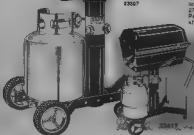
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"Youthening, the Art and Science of Staying Young"

To those who believe they will never grow old "Youthening, the Art and Science of Staying Young" will be the last discussed at the NY Age Center of Harlem's third monthly Sunday Brunch, April 12th from 12 noon-3 p.m. The lecture will be offered by Rev. Donald Thomas, gerontologist, author of *Philosophy of Divine Nurture* (PDM) and *Quintessence of World Records*, holder. He will explain a Holist Health and Mortal Age system that combines spirituality with a pragmatic, contemporary way of living.

Mr. Thomas, a N.Y. State special education teacher in biology and physical fitness, attended City College of N.Y., graduated from U.C.L.A. and is presently a specialist at the Brooklyn Health Science Division of Medgar Evers College. Course is Social Gerontology under an Administration on Aging grant, IV-61. He has a non-profit cultural, educational and healing Center dedicated to spiritual upliftment of the Community, is located on the first floor of a brownstone at 354 W. 123rd St. between Manhattan and Morningside Avenues.

The Center offers classes in Yoga, Creative Mind Control, Massage Therapy, Astrology and Psychic. Survival workshops, monthly group meditations, No. Evenings, LIVE!, the fourth Saturday of each month and Brunches each second Sunday. Mr. Thomas's book will be available. Donation at the door is \$2.00 for the general public and \$1.50 for members.

For further information call 964-4233X 170. Contact Jean Sharp Adhiti 563-2859.

Museum Lecture Series Addresses Tibetan Art

"Form and Content in Tibetan Art," an in-depth analysis of three aspects of Buddhist art in Tibet, will be offered at the Newark Museum on Wednesday, April 8, 15 and 22, at 10:30 a.m.

The lecture series has been arranged by Valerie Reynolds, Curator of Oriental Art, in association with the Museum exhibition "TIBET: A Lost World." All of the Wednesday morning talks will include color slide presentations encompassing Tibetan painting, sculpture and ritual objects from collections in Asia, Europe and America.

On April 8, "The Iconography of Meditation" will be discussed by John Murdoch Reynolds, an instructor at the American Institute of Buddhist Studies, Amherst, and holder of degrees in the Kagyupa and Nyingma schools of Tibetan Buddhism.

Raced Bonibus will examine "Unique and Borrowed Elements in the Buddhist Arts of Tibet" on April 15. Mr. Bonibus is a Visiting Assistant Professor of Religion at Columbia University and an Assistant Professor of Chinese Studies at Hunter College. He is also author of "The Healing Buddha," published in 1979 by Shambhala Press.

The series concludes on April 22 with a talk about "The Tibetan Wheel of Life" by Jacqueline Miller-Durand, Curator. She is a Ph.D. candidate in Buddhist Studies at Columbia University. Mr. Miller-Durand is also interim curator at the Jacques Marchais Tibetan Center and author of the books "Aushadhika" and "Bosai and Loban."

Series reservations will be accepted in order of receipt with payment. The fee is \$15 for

Museum members and \$20 for non-members. A limited number of tickets to individual lectures (\$6 and \$7, respectively) may be available. For information, call (201) 733-6600.

The Newark Museum is lo-

cated at 49 Washington Street in downtown Newark. Convenient parking is available in the adjacent Park East Lot located at the corner of University and Central Avenues.



The ferocious face of the divine goddess, "Vajrasarabhi," is adorned with a skull crown and "Wheel of the Law" carriage. (Solid cast silver, gilded and painted details with turquoise stones; 17th-18th century).

National Library Week

The Newark Public Library will celebrate National Library Week April 12-13 with a very special way. Colorful poster will be distributed free to all visitors to the Main Library and the Branches during the week. The posters, measuring 31" x 41" and in color and graphically describe with pictures and print the resources, services and programs of the Library as well as the procedures for obtaining a borrower's card. The price is in English and Spanish.

The posters will be available not only for individuals but also for all Agencies, Community Centers, Churches, and those organizations serving the Spanish-speaking community. The cost of making is provided. Therefore, we invite representatives of agencies and organizations to visit the Library and pick up a poster for display on bulletin boards.

The public is invited to visit the Library during National Library Week to register and obtain a borrower's card, to take a tour of the building, call 733-7741 for tour details.

look at current exhibits, and to attend one or more of the events scheduled for the following days.

Thursday, April 9, 3:30 p.m. "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" A film for Young Adults and Adults 7:00 p.m.

An evening of Poetry with Vincent Eizenfeld, Cuban Poet. In Spanish. Herberto Padilla will comment on the poems.

Saturday, April 11, 9:00 p.m. "Fashion, Careers and Design." Speakers: Paul Hollett, Director of Admissions, The Fashion Institute of Technology; Tabla Colburn, School of Fashion Careers and James C. Pidgeon, Director of Admissions, The Fashion Institute of Technology.

Special Exhibit: "Interns Found Costume and Historic Book Dress."

Current Exhibits: "Mythical Animals and Fantastic Creatures," "Laughing With America," "The Artist and The Book."

On Stage

that fit." He explained that Othello was a man of too much dignity to go rolling around on the floor. "Pump in a chair, Paul, and keep some dignity."

Much later, in 1940, speaking as Chairman of the Council on African Affairs, Robinson shared the advice he had been given by some very serious Blacks:

You do most for us, by perfecting your art and thus proving to the world the Negro, too, is capable of being a serious artist. Just sing, and keep your mouth shut when you're finished. And for heaven's sake, stop singing spirituals. They remind everybody we used to be slaves. And stop talking about Africa. People will think we're related to those cheerful savages over there. Have us too proud enough of our own, right now?

Robinson clearly had enough of them. There is little wonder that he needed a larger world.

In his biography of the actor, Seton was convinced that "The more he had studied Africa, the more strongly he felt that he was essentially African." In an even larger sense, though, Robinson belonged to the world in a way which Alexander Woollcott describes expansively as he talks about Robinson's greatness. "Paul Robinson strikes me as having been made out of the original stuff of the world, in

this sense he is coral with Adam and the redwood trees of California. He is a fresh cut, a fresh gesture, a fresh effort of creation. I am proud of belonging to this race. For, of course, we both are members of the one sometimes ludicrously described as human." Shaped by the lessons of his own experience and driven by them to people the world over, Robinson developed a unique sense of belonging to the human race.

In retrospect, Robinson's dramatic roles seem to have been linked randomly by theme: the Black leader—usually tribal—and a white love interest. This was certainly true of the negating and the end: Talano and Othello. Although Robinson seemed to confirm the myth that Blacks are natural born actors, he rose majestically above both myth and technique. On stage, with great personal dignity and a keenly sensed sincerity of spirit, he made people "hear" the whisperings in their buried memories." Moreover, he undeniably played "thoroughly upon the nerves and knocked at the hearts of people everywhere." Whenever Paul Robinson stood before a mirror, he saw the universal man in whom he believed so deeply—HELEN ARMS TEAD JOHNSON.

Helen Armstrong Johnson is a founder and curator of the Armstrong Johnson Archives.

"What's Going On..."

FORUM

The Black Heritage Day Parade Committee, in association with Ruben Johnson and Club Paradiso will present an informative forum designed to focus public attention on the five missing youth from Newark and the twenty slain children in Atlanta. The discussion will include innovative methods to prevent future child abductions. Guest speakers will include: Rahyuan Muhammad, Director, Crisis Coalition; Mr. Casell Cooper, East Orange Director of Human Services; Mr. Betty Austin of the Neo-Fight group; Mr. Julius Williams of the Leadership Development Group. In addition, parents and relatives of the five Newark youth, and a parent representing families in Atlanta will attend. All proceeds will go towards investigation and ultimate arrest of person or persons responsible for these heinous acts. Sunday, April 12, Club Paradiso, 984 Broad Street, Newark, 5 p.m. - 12. Donations: \$5.00. Information: Call: Black Heritage Day Parade Committee (201) 623-1594 or Club Paradiso (201) 643-7323/26.

Reading Program

Newark Project Read will sponsor a reading program. Directed by Ms. Carolyn Holmes Bishop, designed to provide participants with necessary tools to tutor students in grades 1-7 in basic reading skills. These completing the course will receive national certification enabling them to seek a paying job at a later date (the program does not provide this service). Location: 969 McCarter Hwy. The dates of the classes are as follows: April 23, 24, 30 and May 1 - 6 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. Registration fee is \$3.00. Information contact: Newark Project Read (9 a.m. - 4 p.m.) (201) 623-9225.

Self Defense Workshop

On Monday evening, April 6, from 8:10 p.m. to 9:45 p.m. the Nu Age Center of Harlem presents a lecture/workshop on "Psychic Self Defense." Ms. Ayio Adu, a psycho-educational health therapist, will talk about the existence of psychic attacks, methods of defense against them, and how you can use psychology to discover and utilize your inner strengths. Admission is free. Call (212) 964-4223 ext. 174 for further

information. The NuAge Center is a nonprofit, cultural educational center dedicated to spiritual upliftment. The Center is located at 354 West 123 St., N.Y.

Reception For Author

First Cousin Communications, Inc., invites you to a Benefit and Recognition for Bermudian author, Dennis Rahim Watson, reading from his soon to be published work "The Things We Do To Each Other." The event which also features guest poets and artists, will be held in the Harlem State Office Building, 2nd floor Art Gallery, Sunday, April 5, 6:30 p.m. Watson is a member of the Frederick Douglass and Benin Writers Workshop in New York. He has performed in the U.S. with "Poet/Artist Unlimited" and locally with "We are People Too." His work has appeared in a number of literary, poetry and cultural journals and he is author of "Words for Lovers, Friends, and Enemies" and "Survival in the 80's."

Theatre

A new drama by Allison West entitled "The Cat Walk" plays thru April 12 at the New Historic Repertory Theatre, 43 East 125th Street (at Madison Avenue). Directed by Roger Furman and featuring members of the Repertory Company, the donation is \$5.00. Call (212) 876-3272 for reservations (except Friday night discounts for students, senior citizens and out-of-work actors).

Conferences

The Upper Manhattan Reading Council will hold a two-day reading conference on April 10 and 11 at the City College Seward Hall, Convent Ave. at 146th Street. The conference is cosponsored by The City College Department of Elementary Education, the Office of Bilingual Education, and The Uptown Chapter of Commerce. On Friday, April 10, the conf. will run from 3:30 to 6:30 p.m., and on Sat., April 11 from 8:45 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Registration fee is \$10 for the general public and \$8 for Upper Manhattan Reading Council members and students with ID.

The African Heritage Studies Association will host their 13th Annual Conference, April 16-18, 1981 in Baltimore, Maryland. Theme: The Many

Faces of Imperialism: Challenge of the 80's, held jointly with The National Conference of Black Political Scientists' 11th Annual Conference. Theme: The Crisis of Black Leadership: National and International Dimensions.

The invited keynote speaker, President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe. Featured speakers include: John Henrik Clarke, Sonia Sanchez, Barbara Seale, James Turner, Yusuf ben-Jochanan and Ronald Walters.

For conference information contact: Black Studies Department, 115 Hamis City College of N.Y., N.Y. 10011, (212) 690-8117 or Shelby Lewis, Public Services Department, Atlanta University, Atlanta, Georgia 30314.

Concerts

In celebration of "Jazz Week" in Newark, N.J., Rutgers University Livingston presents tenor saxophonist, Harold Ashby, in concert. Ashby's chief influences were Ben Webster and Charlie Parker. In 1963, he took over Webster's tenor chair in the Ellington orchestra, remaining one of its leading solo voices until Ellington's death in 1974. Ashby will appear April 7, 8 p.m. at the Lucy Stone Hall Auditorium. Admission is free.

Art Exhibit

After the past ten years, the Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation's Center for Art and Culture has served as host, mentor and provided exhibition space for hundreds of the city's most talented artists. In keeping with this tradition the Center is extremely proud to present its latest offering, "Trans-Images." This exhibit will feature the work of Carlos Suenos, Bill Smith, Allen Kiddick, Kiki Robinson and Minnie Benson. At the opening reception, the Center would also like to introduce to the public its new offices located at 1368 Fulton Street, 3rd Floor, Brooklyn, New York 11216.

The reception for the artists, their guests and the general public will be held Wednesday, April 15, 1981, from 5-8 P.M. at the Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation's Center for Art and Culture at the same address as above. This event is free. For additional information, please contact Mr. Che Baraka at 636-3300.

Theatre Workshops

The National Black Theatre located in central Harlem at 9 East 125th Street will be offering the Joy of Performing Workshop beginning April 1. The workshop will meet on Wednesday evenings from 6:30 p.m. to 10 p.m. through April 23. The Joy Of Performing is a survey course designed to give

its participants the opportunity to discover the tools needed to present themselves joyously in the theatre. This series will include Barbara Christopher, an extremely talented singer and vocal coach, who will assist the participants on vocal technique. Participants for her session on April 8th should bring sheet music of a song they know well and be prepared to sing it to the group.

The series will also include Don Evans, playwright and author of "One Morning Don't Stop No Show", now playing at Brooklyn's Bullitt Holiday Theater, who will work with the participants in the area of playwrighting. Participants for his session on April 15th should bring samples of their work.

The Joy Of Performing is an informative and exciting experience for people who are serious about putting their talents out to the world. For further information, call Shirley Faison at 427-5615.

The Frank Stevens Writers' Workshop announces their

third Writers' Director's State Project opening at the Frank Stevens Writers' Workshop's own space, 317a West 125th Street, 3rd floor, on Thursday, March 26, at 8 p.m.

"Barbie Smith" - An Historical Fantasy, written by Philadelphia playwright Ed Shodley, mirrors the great Blues singer backstage, fighting to overcome her obstacles and conflicts before she has to face her fans and the world. This 12 character piece is being directed by Charles Turner. The project will continue three weeks, March 26, 27, 28, 29, April 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, and 12. Door donation is \$3.50/IDF Voucher.

The Workshop's Writers development program is supported by The N.E.A., NYSCA, Rockefeller Foundation, Jerome Foundation and by private donations.

For inclusion in "What's Goin' On," for announcements, contact: Editor, GRAPHICA, 28 Emerson Street, East Orange, N.J. 07018

Playwrights contest announced

The American Folk Theater today announced a competition of new American plays for showcase presentation to the New York community. The contest is being held to encourage new playwrights and to provide New Yorkers with innovative first-quality theater.

A panel of experienced directors and producers will select five manuscripts for staged readings at the American Folk Theater in which the winning play for showcase presentation will be chosen. Members of the selection panel include John A. Balaban, associate director of American Folk Theater; Marvin Felix Camilo, producer, "The Family"; Leslie Lee, Tony nominated "The First Born of Summer"; and Leah Sheffer, artistic director Symphony Space.

Manuscripts are eligible for consideration if they have never been produced in New York, New Jersey or Connecticut, and if they can be staged with no more than 15 performers including dancers and musicians. Entries must include a one paragraph summary of the plot and a one paragraph description of the theme, cost of

characters and minimal set requirements. All manuscripts must be typed and no more than 120 pages double spaced.

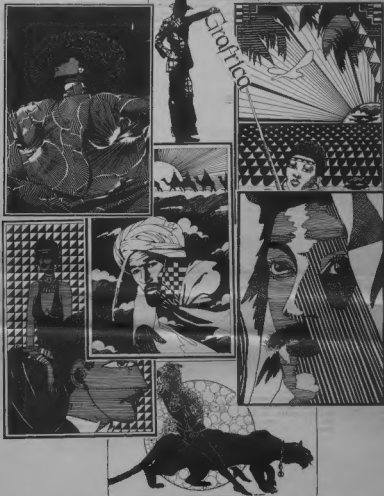
One-act plays or musicals will be accepted. No short and no composers 16 years of age or younger.

All manuscripts must be submitted with a self-addressed, stamped envelope to American Folk Theater, 214 West 97th Street, New York, New York 10019. The deadline is March 31, 1981. For more information about the competition, call Dick Goffield, artistic director of American Folk Theater at (212) 787-1900.

The American Folk Theater is a multi-racial theater on Manhattan's upper west side. Its programs include: in Children's Theater Workshop, staged readings of new works by American playwrights, and a subscription season. This year's season, scheduled to begin in April, includes Tenacious Williams' "A Strident Named Desire", Paul Green and Richard Wright's "Native Son", the classic American melodrama, "The Drunkard", and "In de Begrim" by Oscar Brown Jr.

Next week Paul Robeson "Black Revolutionary Artist"

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